

Preface to *Grundlagen*

Robert Faurisson

Historical revisionism is the great intellectual adventure of the late twentieth century.

Despite its size, the present volume gives only an overview of this adventure. For that reason it is necessary, I think, to outline first the specific question at which the revisionists have directed their researches; then to recall how revisionism arose in the 1940s and how it evolved; and finally, to show how it gained momentum in 1978 and 1979 and how its present impetus is such that even the most draconic punitive measures are evidently unable to check its progress.

In the Nuremberg Trials (1945-1946) Germans were convicted of 'crimes against peace', 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity'. Through their gradual discoveries regarding these three points, the revisionists were compelled, so to speak, to request a revision of the Nuremberg Trial. As far as the first two points go, the revisionists were able to present their arguments with no great difficulties, and probably no serious historian will dispute today that where 'crimes against peace' and 'war crimes' are concerned, no-one need lecture Germany in particular, as it has become quite obvious by now that the Allies also bear a part of the blame for triggering the war and that they themselves committed countless 'war crimes' (if that term even means anything at all, since war itself can be considered a crime). As for the third point, however - the 'crimes against humanity' - we are told ad nauseam that the 'genocide' of the Jews gives Germany the monopoly on cruelty. This is why historical revisionism gradually became what Americans have come to term 'Holocaust revisionism'.

According to her accusers, Germany was not content with persecuting the Jews, deporting them and locking them up in concentration or labor camps; as any historian will know, such crimes are unfortunately quite common in history, and today one needs only turn one's television on to see that all sorts of groups of people continue to suffer such 'crimes'. But Germany, her accusers claim, went much farther than this. Taking a giant step into the province of cruelty, Germany decided in about 1941 - 1942 on the complete destruction of the European Jews, and for purposes of this specific crime she developed and used a specific weapon: the execution gas chamber (or gas van). By means of horrific chemical slaughter-houses, it is claimed, Germany perpetrated collective murder on a grand scale. The murder (ie. the genocide) and the murder weapon (the execution gas chambers) are inseparable components of the issue, and hence it is impossible to claim, as some do, that it really makes no significant difference "whether there were gas chambers or not". In this way, so the claim goes, Germany committed an inherently perverted crime against the Jews. The Jews in turn add to this the allegation that the entire world knowingly let the Germans commit this crime. Such an all-encompassing charge has the paradoxical result that the 'criminals' Hitler, Himmler and Göring are now joined in the dock by their 'accomplices': Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Pope Pius XII, the International Committees of the Red Cross, as well as the representatives of many nations and authorities. That is the claim advanced with dogged determination through, for example, the American 'Holocaust Museums' scattered from Los Angeles to Washington, where the Jews of today set themselves up as the prosecutors of the whole world. They even go so far as to blame the Jewish politicians in charge who lived in Europe, America or Palestine during the war; they throw up in their faces either their collaboration, or their indifference, or their merely luke-warm reactions to the 'systematic extermination' of their co-religionists.

The first rumors of German gassings of Jews allegedly circulated in the Warsaw ghetto in December 1941. (1) However, during the war such rumors were not very well received among the circles hostile to Germany. One only needs to read a book such as *The Terrible Secret* (2) by Walter Laqueur, to see that skepticism was the rule. During the Second World War people still remembered very clearly the fabrications of First World War atrocity propaganda which already then had spread allegations of the gassing of civilians (in churches and elsewhere) as well as tales of corpse factories. The Foreign Office regarded the new rumors of World War Two as nothing more than Jewish fiction, and many American circles shared this conviction. (3) In 1942 Edward Benes the former President of Czechoslovakia (living in exile in London), declared that according to the findings of his intelligence services, the Germans were not exterminating the Jews, regardless of all reports to the contrary. (4) In this same context the American of Jewish descent, Felix Frankfurter, Judge at the Federal Supreme Court, told Jan Karski: "I can't believe you." (5) In August 1943, Secretary of State Cordell Hull notified the American Ambassador in Moscow that it was advisable to delete from the Allies' Joint Declaration regarding "the German crimes in Poland" any mention of gas chambers, since, as the British pointed out, there was "insufficient evidence". (6)

Even after the war, high-ranking Allied politicians such as Eisenhower, Churchill and de Gaulle dispensed with any mention in their memoirs of the existence or operation of the gas chambers. All these skeptics were revisionists in their own way. Neither the Vatican nor the Red Cross nor the German Resistance movement acted as though they believed these rumors which, incidentally, came in all conceivable shapes and flavors: the claim that the Germans exterminated the Jews was a constant, but a wide range of methodologies was proposed -- steam, gas, electricity, fire, acid, high-pressure air, drowning, vacuum pumps, etc. It is not really clear why gas finally won out on the market of atrocity propaganda.

The Frenchman Paul Rassinier was the first real post-war revisionist. In 1950 the former deportee began to denounce the 'gas chamber myth', first in *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, (7) then in numerous other books. In 1976, Arthur Robert Butz, an American, published his book *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, (8) which remains the most thorough and profound study of the topic of genocide and the gas

chambers to date. In 1979 the German Judge Wilhelm Stäglich published his book *Der Auschwitz-Mythos*, (9) in which Stäglich focused primarily on the way in which the German courts have contributed to the genesis of the myth, much like the judges who presided over the witch trials, especially between 1450 and 1650, officially credited the most nonsensical reports of impalements, grid irons and Satan's ovens.

Without wishing to take away from the particular credit due Paul Rassinier, Arthur Robert Butz and Wilhelm Stäglich, I must say that revisionism became materialistic and scientific in the late 1970s due to the on-site research of the Swede Ditlieb Felderer as well as to my own discoveries in Auschwitz itself, my studies on the use of Zyklon B for delousing purposes, and my observations on the use of hydrogen cyanide in the gas chambers of United States prisons where condemned prisoners are executed. Neither Paul Rassinier nor Arthur Robert Butz nor Wilhelm Stäglich had visited the alleged sites of the crime in Poland, and none of them had been in a position to make full use of those physical, chemical, topographic and engineering arguments which Ditlieb Felderer's and my investigations have made commonly available to the most recent generation of revisionist researchers. The Jewish researchers who defend the theory of the extermination of the Jews also remained paper historians, as I call them: Léon Poliakov and Raul Hilberg confined themselves to the realm of words, that is, of speculation.

It is surprising that Germany, with so many capable chemists and engineers, and the USA herself, where there is no lack of scientists who even had the working example of their own hydrogen cyanide gas chambers, did not recognize the vast range of purely scientific arguments. In 1976 in Auschwitz I discovered not only the exact configuration of the crematoria said to have included execution gas chambers, but also the delousing chambers and the (previously hidden) blueprints of certain crematoria. In 1978 and 1979 I published two articles in *Le Monde* (10) in which I briefly summarized my discoveries. In 1979, at the first Conference of the Institute for Historical Review in Los Angeles, I presented these discoveries in detail. In the audience was Ernst Zündel, a German who had settled in Toronto, Canada. As of 1985 he was to prove one of the most zealous and most effective of all revisionists, as well as a pioneer in the field - though many seem to miss this fact. He was the first to understand the great value I placed on the chemical arguments, especially on the significance that the technological level of the United States gas chambers of the 1930s and 1940s had for us. He understood why I was so eager to have an expert on these American gas chambers investigate the alleged execution gas chambers themselves, on-site in Poland. In the 1970s, after my correspondence with the American prisons had turned up such an expert, Fred Leuchter, Ernst Zündel (and he alone) had the brilliant idea of asking him not only to examine the facilities in Poland - which was what I had suggested - but also to take samples of the materials comprising the walls of, on the one hand, the delousing chambers and, on the other hand, the alleged execution gas chambers. In February of 1988 he sent Leuchter and an entire research team to Poland at his own expense in order to examine the alleged execution gas chambers of Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek. The results of on-site examinations of the facilities as well as the analysis of the samples taken proved to be impressive, and totally in support of the revisionist thesis. In the years to follow, other reports were to prove the Leuchter Report (11) correct: first the sophisticated report by Germar Rudolf, (12) then the embarrassed, clandestine counter-report of the Poles, (13) and finally the study conducted by the Austrian, Walter Lüftel. (14)

It goes without saying that Germany's accusers, if they are not happy with these findings, are free to commission their own expert reports. Why have they waited for fifty years to do so openly and publicly?

It is easy to understand the dismay expressed by Germany's accusers in the face of the successes achieved by revisionism. For half a century they honestly believed that the tragedy suffered by the Jews in the Second World War was of an extraordinary scope, whereas this tragedy, once reduced to its true dimensions - that is, without gas chambers - joins the mere rank and file of the many tragedies of that terrible war. Under the pressure of revisionist studies their historians have gradually had to admit that the alleged genocide of the Jews is not documented by an order, nor by a plan, nor by a budget; (15) that Wannsee was at best a "silly story"; (16) that there is no expert report on the murder weapon which concludes that "these facilities (either intact, or 'reconstructed', or in ruins) were used as execution gas chambers;" that not a single autopsy has ever concluded that "this is the body of a gassed deportee;" that the confession of Rudolf Höss had no value ("Höss was always a very weak and confused witness"); (17) that their so-called witnesses in all likelihood never saw a gas chamber or a gassing; that in 1988 the best of them, the well-known Rudolf Vrba, saw himself forced to confess to a Canadian judge and jury that his famous book on the subject was replete with instances of "poetic licence"; (18), (19) that the number of four million victims in Auschwitz was merely fictitious (20) and that "[s]ources for the study of the gas chambers are at once rare and unreliable [...]. Besides, from 1942 to 1945, certainly at Auschwitz, but probably overall, more Jews were killed by so-called 'natural' causes [starvation, disease, sickness and overwork] than by 'unnatural' ones." (21) As early as July 2, 1982, at the conclusion of an international colloquium which the proponents of the extermination theory had held at the Sorbonne in Paris in order to reply to my arguments, the exterminationists had proven themselves incapable of providing even the slightest shred of evidence for the existence and operation of even a single gas chamber. In May 1992 I challenged: "Show me or draw me a Nazi gas chamber!" Jean-Claude Pressac, in whom the exterminationists had placed so much stock, proved incapable of presenting anything other than "criminal traces," and he carefully refrained from giving an overall physical description of the murder weapon. (22)

On August 31, 1994, I met Michael Berenbaum, Head of the Research Institute at the Holocaust Memorial at Washington. We spoke in his office, in the presence of four witnesses (two on either side). I forced him to admit that, paradoxically enough, his Museum contains not a single concrete representation of a Nazi gas chamber (since the model of Krema II is only an artistic creation bearing no resemblance to reality). I asked him why this was so. Finally he replied: "The decision has been made [by us] not to give any physical representation of the Nazi gas chambers." His answer is tantamount to a Catholic priest (Michael Berenbaum is a Jewish theologian) declaring that he had decided to remove any and all representations of the Cross from his church. To make a statement such as that, one must really be desperate.

I think that Michael Berenbaum's co-religionists will ultimately give up the gas chambers just as they gave up the stories of Jewish soap and the four million of Auschwitz. But they will go further. Just as in the latter two cases, they will again make themselves seem to have discovered the myth, and will accuse the Germans, the Polish or the Communists of having fabricated the 'myth of the gas chambers' in the first place. To lend credence to their claim, they will then name Jews who are partial or full revisionists (J.G.Burg, Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit, Roger-Guy Dommergue, Arno Mayer, David Cole, Christopher Hitchens, Stephen Hayward...). They will cast themselves

in the glorious role, so to speak.

The transformation of the Jewish 'Holocaust' into a religious belief devoid of all material substance will render them even more relentless, and they will regard the true revisionists as intolerant, heartless, mean, materialistic 'negators' or 'negationists' opposed to the free expression of religious beliefs. In other words, to these Jews the revisionists will remain fiends in spirit even if one must concede their correctness in fact.

Revisionists are neither fiendish nor negative. They have nothing of that 'spirit that denies'. They are positive. They maintain, as the result of their strictly positivistic researches, that certain convictions are nothing but myths. Such myths are harmful in that they foster hatred. The revisionists endeavor to describe what took place, not what did not take place. On the whole their message to poor afflicted mankind is good news. They strive only for historical accuracy, and had no other aim than that; but as it turned out, they now fight against calumny and for justice, without having intentionally chosen the role. They have suffered and will continue to suffer, but I believe that in the end history will prove them right and do them justice. (23)

September 23, 1994.

Footnotes

1/ "Stockholm, Dec. 21 (JTA). - More than 1,000 victims of spotted fever [sic; ie. typhus] in the densely crowded Warsaw ghetto have been put to death by gas [...], it is learned today from reliable sources." (The Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin, December 22, 1941, p. 1).

2/ Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: An Investigation into the Suppression of Information about Hitler's 'Final Solution'*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.

3/ *ibid.*; see also "Foreign Office" in the index, as well as pp. ?, ?, ?, ? etc.

4/ *ibid.*, p. 162-163.

5/ *ibid.*; p. 237.

6/ *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers*, Washington: US Printing Office, 1963, v. 1 of 1943, p. 416-417.

7/ Paul Rassinier, *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, Paris: La Librairie française, 1950; cf. also Rassinier, *Was ist Wahrheit? Die Juden und das Dritte Reich*, Berg: Druffel, 1982.

8/ Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case Against the Presumed Extermination of the Jews*, Newport Beach, CA: Institute for Historical Review. One should read the 1993 edition, which contains three supplements reproducing conference presentations given by the author in 1979, 1982 and 1992 respectively. In the supplement from 1982 I particularly recommend his brilliant presentation of evidence in "the case of the invisible elephant," pp. 350-362.

9/ Wilhelm Stäglich, *Der Auschwitz-Mythos. Legende oder Wirklichkeit? Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme*, Tübingen: Grabert-Verlag, 1979 (Eng.: *The Auschwitz Myth: A Judge Looks at the Evidence*, Newport Beach, CA: Institute for Historical Review, 1986. In Germany the book was confiscated on the orders of German authorities. A second German edition was subsequently published in Great Britain: *Der Auschwitz-Mythos [...]*, preface by Mark Weber, with a contribution by Robert Faurisson, comments by Revilo P. Oliver, Charles E. Weber and Arthur R. Butz, Historical Press [19A Madeira Place, Brighton, Sussex, England BN2 1TN], 1984. The photo documents in both editions came from my archives.

10/ *Le Monde*, December 29, 1978 and January 16, 1979.

11/ *The Leuchter Report: An Engineering Report on the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek*, Poland, 193 p. Ernst Zündel published this report with a preface which I wrote on April 23, 1988 (Samisdat Publishers, 206 Carlton St., Toronto, ON, M5A 2L1, Canada).

12/ Rüdiger Kammerer and Armin Solms (eds.), *Das Rudolf-Gutachten*, London: Cromwell Press, 1993.

13/ *Die offizielle polnische Antwort auf den Leuchter-Bericht*. Translated from the Polish by T. Rudolph, disseminated by E. Zündel (cf. Note 11).

14/ Walter Lüftl, "Holocaust", in *Journal of Historical Review* 12 (4) Winter 1992/93, pp. 391-420.

15/ In the first edition of *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961, p. 177), Raul Hilberg calmly claims that there was an order (in fact, two successive orders!) for the extermination of the Jews. In the second edition, published in 1985 (New York: Holmes and Meier), he explains matters quite differently: he no longer makes any mention of even one order; he writes that there was no "basic plan" (p. 53) and that "no single organization directed or coordinated the entire process [of destruction]" (p. 55); he adds: "No special agency was created and no special budget was devised to destroy the Jews of Europe" (p. 62). He explains the entire alleged operation of the destruction of the Jews as "an incredible meeting of minds, a consensus, mind-reading by a far-flung bureaucracy." R. Hilberg made this claim in a lecture given on February 22, 1983 and confirmed it under cross-examination at the Zündel Trial in 1985 in

Toronto, transcripts pp. 846-848!

16/ Yehuda Bauer, Professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, declared (verbatim): "The public still repeats, time after time, the silly story that at Wannsee the extermination of the Jews was arrived at." (The Canadian Jewish News, January 20, 1982, p. 8, repeating a dispatch from The Jewish Telegraphic of London.)

17/ Professor Christopher Browning, co-author of the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust, responding to Christopher Hitchens, "Whose history is it?" in Vanity Fair, December 1993, p. 117. The professor had the audacity to add: "The revisionists use [R. Höss] all the time for this reason, in order to try and discredit the memory of Auschwitz as a whole."

18/ Zündel Trial in Toronto, 1985, transcripts pp. 1447-1448, 1636. The book in question is titled I Cannot Forgive, Toronto: Bantam Books, 1964.

19/ Shmuel Krakowski, Head of Archives at Yad Vashem, and Professor Yehuda Bauer admitted in 1990 that "the Nazis never made soap from human fat." (The Jerusalem Post International Edition, May 5, 1990.) In a graveyard in Nizza, France, a tombstone is inscribed: "Cette urne renferme du savon à la graisse humaine fabriquée par les Allemands du IIIe Reich avec les corps de nos frères déportés." ("This urn contains soap from human fat, made by the Germans of the Third Reich from the bodies of our deported brothers.")

20/ Jean-Claude Pressac approximates the number of dead at Auschwitz as between 630,000 and 710,000; this, he claims, includes some 470,000 550,000 gassed Jews. (Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers, New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989.)

21/ Arno J. Mayer, The 'Final Solution' in History, New York: Pantheon Books, 1988, p. 362, 365. The author is of Jewish extraction and teaches history at Princeton University, USA.

22/ It is remarkable that J.-C. Pressac, who certainly can draw, does not dare in any of his books to depict a complete gas chamber and to give an explanation of its "technique and operation". In his sizable book (Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers, New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1989) he writes that there is no "direct proof", but rather "criminal traces" or "indirect proof[s]" (p. 429).

23/ A fundamental sourcebook of historical revisionism was compiled by Canadian attorney Barbara Kulaszka: Did Six Million Really Die? Report of the Evidence in the Canadian 'False News' Trial of Ernst Zündel - 1988, Samisdat Publishers (206 Carlton St., Toronto, ON, M5A 2L1, Canada), 1992.

French manuscript dated 23 September 1994. This text is the preface of *Grundlagen zur Zeitgeschichte. Ein Handbuch über strittige Fragen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, a collective book on advanced revisionist studies, edited by Ernst Gauss [Germar Rudolf] and published by Grabert in Tübingen (Germany) in 1994. This book has been translated into English and corrected first on Internet, and finally in *Dissecting the Holocaust -- The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory'*, Capshaw (Alabama), Theses and Dissertations Press, 2000. The French original text was not published until it was included in the *Ecrits révisionnistes*, IV, p. 1608-1616, in 1999.

This version has been apparently translated from German and computerized by CODOH in 1997. The reader should know that *Dissecting the Holocaust* carries a different version of the same text, but translated from the French by Tom Kerr. See <<http://www.vho.org/>>

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